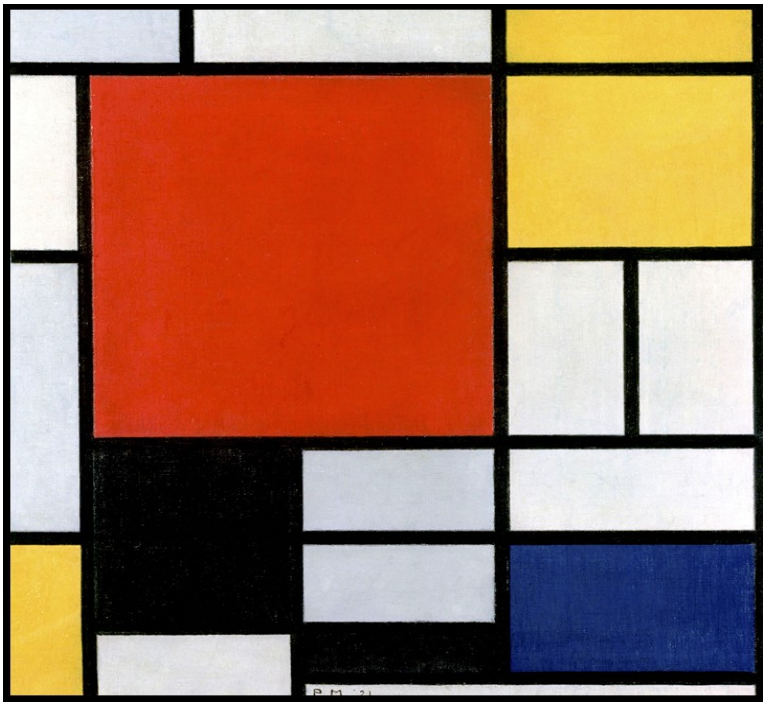
11 Theses on the Colonization of the Real by the Performative



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Desde el rincón de la Izquierda

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11 Theses on the Colonization of the Real by the Performative

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> *"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."*
>
> Karl Marx, Tesis XI sobre Feuerbach (1845)

I. The axiom: the tautological incompatibility

It should not need proving, because it follows from the definition of the terms. But it must be said, because no one says it.

Equality, in the tradition that originates with the French Revolution and constitutes the foundation of Enlightenment-based left-wing thought, consists in making the differences between individuals irrelevant for the purposes that matter: rights, treatment, access to goods. The project of equality is a project of dissolving differences into a common space where everyone is worth the same.

1 *The Centro de Estudios por el Pensamiento Crítico e Ilustrado is a non-profit and independent association whose purpose is the preservation and deepening of enlightened and left-wing thought.*

Identity politics consists in exactly the opposite: in making differences relevant. Protecting them, strengthening them, institutionalizing them. Each claimed identity is a difference that is demanded to be seen, recognized and maintained. Identities, to be identities at all, must be diverse — to speak of "diversity of identities" is a redundancy; if they were not distinct, there would be only one identity, and there would be nothing to protect.

If one pursues a politics that protects and strengthens identities, one pursues a politics against the dissolution of those identities. Ergo, against their subsumption into equality. It is a politics against equality.

This is not an empirical observation about what happens when identity policies are applied. It is not an account of unintended consequences. It is a tautology: it follows from the logical structure of the concepts. Identity and equality are inverse operations. One builds what the other undoes. They cannot be pursued simultaneously because they are mutually exclusive by definition.

All the critical literature on identity politics from the left — from Fisher to Reed, from Benn Michaels to Bernabé — observes the consequences of this incompatibility without formulating it for what it is: an axiom. They observe that identity fragments solidarity, that it replaces redistribution, that it serves capitalism. All of that is true, but it is derivative. The root is simpler: identity and equality do not fit in the same shoe.

II. The abysmal distinction: oppression and respect

There is an abysmal difference — not of degree, but of nature — between two operations that identity politics has deliberately fused into one:

The first: fighting against the oppression of a group. That gay

people should not be beaten. That women should not be discriminated against at work. That no one should be denied rights because of their ethnic origin or their religion. This operation tends toward equality: its objective is that difference be irrelevant. That being gay be as inconsequential as being left-handed. That being a woman not determine your salary. That being Muslim not determine your access to employment. It is the dissolution of difference into the common space of rights.

The second: demanding respect for and celebration of identity as such. Pride, visibility, institutional recognition of difference as a positive value. Pride day, the flag, quotas, the protection of the hijab as an identity expression, the adaptation of school menus to halal standards, gender recognition policies. This operation tends in the opposite direction: its objective is that difference be relevant, visible, permanent. It is the consolidation of difference as a category.

The first is compatible with equality. The second is structurally incompatible — it is the axiom in action. And the rhetorical trick of identitarianism has consisted in fusing the two things so that criticizing the second appears to be attacking the first. Whoever questions Pride is homophobic. Whoever questions the trans law is transphobic. Whoever questions the hijab in public schools is Islamophobic. It has been made impossible to separate the fight against oppression from the celebration of identity. And that fusion is deliberate, because without it identitarianism loses its moral shield.

III. The objective measure of oppression: the shoe

To speak of oppression one needs an objective criterion. The metaphor is simple: one must measure the volume of the shoe and the volume of the foot. If the shoe is smaller than the foot — if the

social space available is less than what the subject needs to exercise their rights — there is oppression. If the shoe is equal to or larger than the foot, there is not. There may be discomfort, displeasure, frustration, but not oppression.

Identity politics has erased this distinction. It has turned any discomfort into oppression. The shoe fits, but you don't like the colour: oppression. The shoe fits, but you'd rather go barefoot: oppression. The boundary between "the shoe doesn't fit" and "I don't like the shoe" has been eliminated. And without that boundary, everything is oppression, nothing is oppression, and the word loses its meaning.

Moreover: oppression stemming from one's own personal choice is equated with structural oppression. A school rule forbidding head coverings does not oppress someone who does not wish to cover their head. It oppresses — says identitarianism — someone who has chosen a religion whose rules clash with the universal norm. But the choice is theirs. The shoe does not pinch them; it is the foot that has decided to have a shape that does not fit. And it demands that the shoe be remade to its measure, while all other feet wear the same one.

And there is more: the question of who decides the size of the foot. In a system based on the objectifiable, the foot is measured from outside. In a performative system, the foot is the size its owner declares. And if the foot changes size every time it speaks, no shoe can possibly serve as a measure.

IV. The three levels of difference

Not all differences are equal. There are three qualitatively distinct levels:

Level 1 — Natural/perceptual difference: sex and race

Genetic, biological, visible differences. No social system produces them: the social system uses them, hierarchizes them, may oppress them, but does not create them. They are there before any speech act and before any productive system. They are exterior to the subject. They are directly perceived. They are falsifiable: "this person is biologically female" is a proposition that can be empirically verified and refuted.

Level 2 — Social/objective difference: class

It is not natural, not genetic, not directly perceived by looking at someone on the street. It is produced by the productive system. But it is objectifiable, measurable, exterior. It does not depend on what the subject says about themselves. You are a worker because you do not own the means of production, not because you proclaim yourself a worker. Income is measured. Property is registered. The relationship with the means of production is verified. It is a falsifiable proposition.

[Dividing line: between Level 1 and Level 2 there is a difference of nature. One is genetic, the other social. But both share the essential: they are exterior, objectifiable, falsifiable.]

Level 3 — Performative/subjective difference: contemporary identities

They are neither natural nor measurable from outside. They are born from a performative speech act: "I am." I am non-binary, I am gender-fluid, I am pansexual. But also: I am a practicing Muslim and I demand halal; I am a believer and I demand to cover my head; I belong to a particular cultural community and I demand that my customs be respected as rights. In all cases, the identity is constituted politically at the moment recognition is claimed: "I am this and I demand to be treated accordingly." The criterion of truth is the subject's self-identification. They are unfalsifiable

propositions: no empirical observation can disprove them from outside. If the subject says they are, they are.

**[THE LINE: between Levels 1-2 and Level 3 there is an impassable epistemological frontier. Levels 1 and 2 are objectifiable and falsifiable. Level 3 is performative and unfalsifiable. On the falsifiable one can build science, equality policy, verifiable legislation. On the unfalsifiable one can only build faith, recognition policy, and legislation based on the declarant's word.]*

V. The Popperian challenge

Karl Popper established that a proposition is scientific if and only if it is falsifiable — if there exists at least one empirical statement that could refute it. What is not falsifiable is not science: it is metaphysics, it is faith, it is dogma.

Level 1 and Level 2 propositions are falsifiable. "This person is a woman" can be verified chromosomally. "This person is a worker" can be verified by their relationship with the means of production. They are statements upon which objective knowledge can be built and, therefore, public policy founded on data.

Level 3 propositions are unfalsifiable. "I am non-binary" cannot be refuted by any external observation. Nor can "my faith requires this rite" — faith is, by definition, not demonstrable. There is no test, no measure, no criterion other than the declarant's word. They are statements upon which objective knowledge cannot be built, and therefore the public policy founded upon them rests on an act of faith.

Identitarianism asks the State to legislate on unfalsifiable propositions. To build legal categories on subjective declarations. To measure shoes whose size is decided by the foot and only the foot, with no ruler possible. The Enlightenment left, heir to the French

Revolution and the Enlightenment, does not legislate on faith. That was the business of the Ancien Régime.

VI. The reduction of the field

In Western Europe, in terms of differential public policies currently in force, the battlefield has been considerably reduced:

Race (Level 1), in practice, no longer generates differential public policies in Europe — except residually. And this with the additional irony that identitarian science declares that races do not exist in the human species, while simultaneously building its entire politics on racial discrimination. They combat racism by denying that race exists: an irresolvable logical loop.

Class (Level 2) has been legally equalized since the French Revolution: one person, one vote, equality before the law. Enormous material inequalities persist, but there are no policies granting differential rights based on class.

The real field is thus reduced to two forces: sex (what remains operative of Level 1) and the identitarian conglomerate (Level 3), which includes not only gender identities but also religious and cultural identities and any others claimed through the performative speech act.

VII. The colonization: Level 3 takes Level 1

Here is the decisive move. Level 3 has not stayed within its territory. It has invaded Level 1.

Trans identity claims to belong to Level 1: "I am a woman." But it does so with the tools of Level 3: performative speech act, self-perception as the sole criterion, unfalsifiable proposition. It is a claim to Level 1 status executed with Level 3 logic. It asks to be recognized as a biological datum (Level 1) on the basis of a

subjective declaration (Level 3).

And by slipping inside Level 1, the performative logic of Level 3 has contaminated the public policies that had been built on objective sexual difference. The paradigmatic case is the presumption of truthfulness in gender-based violence legislation.

VIII. The performative chain

The presumption of truthfulness in gender-based violence was theoretically designed as a Level 1 policy: to protect women — a biological, objective, falsifiable category — from male violence. But at the moment the legal category "woman" ceased to be falsifiable — at the moment "woman" is whoever says they are one —, the policy ceased to be Level 1. It is now Level 3.

The chain is:

- **Performative identity:** "I am a woman" — speech act, unfalsifiable.
- **Unfalsifiable legal category:** the law accepts self-declaration as sufficient criterion. "Woman" is no longer verified; it is declared.
- **Unfalsifiable presumption of truthfulness:** if the category "woman" rests on the declarant's word, that "woman's" accusation rests on the same criterion. If we doubt the truthfulness of her accusation, we doubt the truthfulness of her identity. And if we doubt her identity, we are transphobes.

The entire edifice — identity, legal category, presumption of truthfulness — rests on a single point: the speech act "I am." And that speech act is, by definition, unverifiable and unfalsifiable.

IX. The subject without speech

In this system, there is a subject who is left out. The man — white, heterosexual, cisgender — is the only one not granted performative speech. He has no valid "I am." He cannot declare an identity that grants him protection, recognition, or presumption of truthfulness. His word does not found categories. His accusation enjoys no such presumption. His experience of discrimination is not a protected

identity. He is the system's residue: the subject who remains after everyone else has declared their "I am."

If he defends himself, he is aggressive. If he presents evidence, he is revictimizing. If he is acquitted, the system has failed, not the accusation.

Unless, of course, he declares himself therian — identifies as an animal. This is the system's final reductio ad absurdum: the only "I am" available to the white heterosexual man is to cease being human.

X. The implosion: the reductio ad absurdum

If the system is internally coherent, it should be able to resolve all cases presented to it. But there is one case that breaks it: a trans woman accuses a trans man of gender-based violence.

Who has the presumption of truthfulness? The trans woman is a woman by performative speech act. The trans man is a man by performative speech act, and therefore a presumed aggressor — also by performative speech act. Who is the victim and who the perpetrator when both identities are performative and neither is falsifiable? What shoe is being measured when both feet change size according to what they declare?

The system cannot resolve it by its own rules. Performative logic, applied consistently, devours itself. Just as colliding identities — halal against animal rights, the hijab against universal rules of public space, biological women against trans women in a pub in La Bañeza[2] — the system produces contradictions that can only be

2 In March 2026, a trans woman was brutally assaulted in a pub in La Bañeza (León, Spain) for entering the women's restroom. Five women between 18 and 24 years of age were arrested by the Civil Guard, charged with assault and rioting. The victim suffered a broken jaw and nearly lost an eye. See: "Detenidas cinco mujeres por la paliza a Miss Trans Zamora en La Bañeza (León)," *The Objective*, 27 March 2026; "Miss Trans Zamora, víctima de una brutal paliza en un pub de León por usar el baño de mujeres," *OKDiario*, 23 March 2026.

resolved from outside of it: through equality, through universality, through objective and falsifiable criteria. Through, ultimately, what the system itself has destroyed.

XI. Desires and rights

Identitarianism is not a left-wing project. It is the application of the fundamental principle of neoliberalism — reality must accommodate the individual — to the terrain of identity.

And the key is in one word: individual. The identitarian operation appears collective — one speaks of "Muslims," "homosexuals," "trans people" — but in reality it is radically individualist. What is claimed is not the liberation of a group from an objective and measurable oppression. It is the right of each individual to have reality adjust to their desire. To their self-perception. To their inner feeling.

Islam is not being persecuted. Muslims are persecuted. Homosexuality is not being persecuted. Homosexuals are persecuted. "I am being persecuted. I, who am homosexual." It is the complaint of the sovereign consumer transferred to politics: my desire is my right, and reality must adjust to it.

To turn one's desires into rights in the real world, in reality. Performatively. The neoliberal dream. The Hollywood dream and the El Dorado of post-industrial society.

Advance of the conclusions of the essay in progress, freed from academic discussion.

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